

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the thorough examination of the application. No new matter is believed to be added to the application by this Amendment.

Status Of The Claims

Claims 1, 3, 4 and 6-21 are pending in the application. Claim 5 is canceled and its subject matter is incorporated into claim 1, and the amendments to claim 1 find additional support in the specification at page 9, line 26 to page 10, line 4. Claims 6 and 7 have been amended to not depend upon canceled claim 5. Claims 12, 14 and 15 have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions. Claim 19 find support in the specification at page 10, lines 15-17. Claim 20 finds support in the specification at page 6, lines 6-9 and 19-22. Claim 21 find support in the specification at page 9, lines 11-14.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

Claims 12-15 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph as being indefinite. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 12, 14 and 15 have been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestions set forth in paragraph 2 of the Office Action. As a result, the claims are clear, definite and have full antecedent basis. This rejection is overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Rejections Based on EP '143

Claims 1, 3, 4, 8-10, 12-14 and 16 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP '143 (EP 790143) in view of JP '804 (JP 3-159804) and Hubbell (U.S. Patent 5,733,393).

Claims 3 and 4 have been further rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP '143 in view of JP '804 and Hubbell and further in view of JP '203 (JP 4-110203).

Claims 5-7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP '143 in view of JP '804 and Hubbell and further in view of Rampl (U.S. Patent 4,739,811).

Claims 11, 15, 17 and 18 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over EP '143 in view of JP '804 and Hubbell and further in view of JP '011 (JP 8-113011).

The aforesaid rejections are traversed and reconsideration and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

First, the incorporation of claim 5 into claim 1 overcomes all the aforesaid rejections except that over EP '143 in view of JP '804 and Hubbell and further in view of Rampl.

Second, claim 1 has been amended to set forth embodiments of the second invention that are patentable over the combination of EP '143 in view of JP '804 and Hubbell and further in view of Rampl. Claims depending upon claim 1 are patentable for at least the above reasons.

These rejections are overcome and withdrawal thereof is respectfully requested.

Information Disclosure Statements

The Examiner is thanked for considering the Information Disclosure Statements filed January 22, 2004 and June 28, 2004, and for making the PTO-1449 forms of record in the application in the Office Action mailed September 14, 2005.

Prior Art

The prior art cited, but not utilized, by the Examiner indicates the status of the conventional art that the invention supersedes. Additional remarks are accordingly not necessary.

The Drawings

The Examiner has accepted the drawing figures in the Office Action mailed May 15, 2006.

Foreign Priority

The Examiner has acknowledged foreign priority and noted that none of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received, as is set forth in the Office Action mailed September 14, 2005.

Conclusion

The Examiner's rejections have been overcome, mooted, or obviated. No issues remain. The Examiner is accordingly, respectfully requested to place the application into condition for allowance and to issue a Notice of Allowability.

If any outstanding matters remain, the Examiner is asked to contact Robert E. Goozner, Ph.D. (Reg. No. 42,593) at the below-listed telephone number in the Washington metropolitan area.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.14; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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